

2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

First Edition – 1/16 to 1/21/18

~ State of the State and Both Bodies Down One Legislator ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Governor Walker's State of the State address can be found here: [State of the State](#)

Walker's bottom line: "We need improved public safety, budget reform, a real fiscal plan and we need to energize the economy. These aren't wants; they are needs, and it's our responsibility to make it happen. Now."

Lawmakers and staff attended anti-sexual harassment in the workplace training this week.

A report by the legislature's human resources manager confirmed former Rep. Westlake's actions and comments during the first session created a hostile work environment and sexual harassment.

See report here: [Westlake Final report](#)

The report also confirms Speaker Edgmon and Majority Leader Tuck acted in accordance with the legislature's existing policy on addressing reports of sexual and other workplace harassment in responding to allegations.

A legislative working group is expected to recommend changes to strengthen those policies later in the session.

Westlake tendered his resignation over the interim. The Governor is soon expected to select his replacement from a list of three candidates submitted from Westlake's district.

Senator Dunleavy resigned his seat to focus on his gubernatorial bid. On Monday, Republican delegates from House Districts 9 and 10 forwarded three names to the Governor to serve out Dunleavy's term. The Governor has 30 days from the date of a legislator's resignation to make his selection.

After the Governor announces his selections the Democrats in the House and the Republicans in the Senate must confirm the selections or the whole process restarts.

Forty bills were pre-filed the week before session got underway. As bills start to move Capitol Currents will give them a deeper dive. For now, click on the bill numbers below to read about them. The last day for personal bill introduction is **February 19th**.

BUDGET ISSUES

Taxes and the permanent fund held prominent places in budget bills introduced this week.

The Rules committee in both houses introduced bills from the Governor which included:

[HB 281](#) / [SB 139](#) Employment Tax
[HB 282](#) / [SB 140](#) Capital Budget Contingent on Tax
[HB 283](#) / [SB 141](#) Biennial Budget
[HB 284](#) / [SB 142](#) Capital Budget
[HB 285](#) / [SB 143](#) Mental Health Budget
[HB 286](#) / [SB 144](#) Operating Budget

For more information about the Governor's budget bills click here: [Governor's Budget Plan](#)

Legislators also introduced bills to manage the budget and ensure the preservation of the permanent fund dividend:

[HB 216](#) Transfers from Dividend Fund: Crimes by Rep. Kopp
[HB 236](#) Extend Senior Benefits Payment Program by Rep. Kawasaki
[HB 256](#) PFD/Other Contributions to Agencies/Munis by Rep. Eastman
[HB 264](#) Shopping Bag Fees & Recycling by Rep. Josephson
[HB 287](#) Approp./Education/Student Transportation by Rep. Seaton
[HB 288](#) Oil and Gas Production Tax by Rep. Tarr
[HB 296](#) Youth Marijuana Prevention Programs/Fund by Rep. Claman
[SB 128](#) Marijuana Education and Treatment Fund/Program by Sen. Giessel
[SB 130](#) Voter Approval for New Taxes by Sen. Meyer
[SB 131](#) Education Budget; Funding by Sen. Stevens
[SB 138](#) Legislator Per Diem: Regular and Special Sessions by Sen. Micciche
[SJR 9](#) Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund Approp; Dividend by Sen. Stedman
[SJR 10](#) Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund Approp; POMV; Dividend by Sen. Begich

Important Budget Dates:

15th Legislative Day Deadline for Governor's Supplemental budget requests.
30th Legislative Day Deadline for Governor to submit budget Amendments.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

[HJR 26](#) Const. Am.; Redistricting/Board Membership by Rep. Gara
[HJR 27](#) Const. Am.: Term Limits of Legislators by Rep. Kito
[HJR 28](#) Const. Am.; Elected Attorney General by Rep. Neuman
[SJR11](#) Const. Am.; Repeal Marriage Section by Sen. Begich

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

Two abortion bills were introduced. [HB 266](#) sponsored by Rep. Tilton and [SB 124](#) by Sen. Giessel.

The bills require a physician performing the abortion to use the method of terminating the pregnancy that provides the best opportunity for the unborn child to survive if, in the physician's clinical judgment, the method does not present a serious risk to the life or health of the pregnant woman.

If the fetus survives the procedure it is to be declared a child in need of aid and turned over to the Department of Health and Social Services.

[HB 258](#) sponsored by Rep. Tuck establishes a Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Bills were also introduced to extend the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate [HB 274](#); the Board of Massage Therapists [HB 275](#); and, the Board and Marital and Family Therapy [HB 280](#).

Rep. Gara introduced [HB 268](#) Opioid Prescription Warning this week. The bill requires medical professionals licensed to prescribe opioids to explain the reason for the prescription, offer non-opioid alternatives, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using the prescription for shorter periods of time, and warn patients about the risks of addiction.

Sen. Gardner introduced two bills this week: [SB 133](#) clarifies marriage is a civil contract entered into by two natural persons. Each person must be at least one of the following: 18 years of age; emancipated; or a member of the armed forces of the United States while on active duty.

SB 133 also repeals [AS 25.05.171](#) which currently allows persons between the ages of 16-18 to get married with parental consent and allows persons as young as 14 to get married with judicial authorization.

[SB 134](#) amends statutes regarding termination of parental rights to include incest as grounds for termination.

[HB 151](#), Rep. Gara's bill regarding child in need of aid and foster care was transferred to the Senate and referred to the HSS and FIN committees this week.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

The Governor introduced six bills to support his plan to increase public safety over the next several years. View the transmittal letters here: [Governor's Transmittal letters for Public Safety Plan](#)
[View Public Safety Plan Update 1.18](#)

The bills are:

[HB 290](#) Criminal Justice Commission Membership-giving voting rights to the Commissioner of Health and Social Services

[HB 291](#) AG Schedule Controlled Substances-giving the AG authority to schedule a controlled substance through emergency regulation

[HB 292](#) Misconduct Controlled Substances in the 2nd degree - adds this crime to statute

[HB 293](#) Background Checks for Police and Training

[HB 294](#) Surcharge for Commission of Offense-increases surcharges for felony and misdemeanor convictions paid to the Alaska Police Standards Council

[HB 295](#) Pre-Trial Release; Non-AK Criminal History

Sen. MacKinnon introduced [SB 136](#) concerning restitution payments to crime victims and Sen. Costello introduced [SB 127](#), basically a repeal of the crime bill-SB91-from 2016.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Check the committee calendar the day of the scheduled hearing as sometimes a bill is rescheduled at the last minute

Daily Committee Hearings for 2018: [Meetings](#)

Gavel to Gavel: Most committee hearings can be seen and heard on Gavel Alaska. It is broadcast on both local access TV and on the internet at [360 North Gavel](#)

Streaming Video: [Live Now](#)

Testifying: Legislative Information Office (LIO) Find your LIO here: <http://akleg.gov/lios.php>

In Juneau: See committee hearing list for room numbers

Call-in: Available with prior approval from the committee chair

From Anchorage: (907) 563-9085; From Juneau: (907) 586-9085; all others: (844)586-9085

HEARINGS OF INTEREST

If you want to share your opinions/concerns about a particular piece of legislation, look for hearings where the committees list public testimony being taken. That's your chance! Comments are usually time-limited (between 2-3 minutes). Written comments are taken too and can be of any length.

Monday, HJUD will take up [SB 63](#) Regulation of Smoking at 1:00pm; and, Boards and Commissions extensions are being heard in HL&C at 3:15pm. SB 63 will have a follow-up meeting in HJUD on Wednesday.

HFIN will take up the operating and mental health budgets with an overview from the legislative finance director, David Teal on Tuesday at 1:30pm. Over the next few weeks budget overviews of Departments will be an on-going item on their agenda. Budget subcommittees also start their hearings this week.

Michelle Overstreet from My House in Wasilla, Ginny Walsh from Arctic Women in Crisis in Utqiagvik and a guest speaker from New York City will share information with HHSS regarding [HB 25](#), Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives, Tuesday afternoon at 3pm. -

[SB 131](#), Sen. Steven's Education Budget bill will have it's first hearing Wednesday morning in SEDC. The committee will be taking public testimony. The bill will be back up Thursday afternoon at 3:30pm.

[HB 240](#) Rep. Guttenberg's Pharmacy Benefits Managers bill is scheduled in HL&C Friday afternoon at 3:15pm. The committee will be taking public testimony.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Second Session contact information should be available next week. The 2017 lists have not been updated.

~ End of Report ~

If I've missed a bill your group is following or wants to follow, let me know!

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